

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:381
ANSWERED ON:26.07.2006
OPENING OF NATHULA PASS
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether talks were held between the officials of India and the Tibetan Autonomous region regarding opening of Nathula Pass;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the effect of the same on Indo-Sino relations;
- (c) whether the Nathula Pass has since been opened for trade between India and China;
- (d) if so, the details in this regard; and
- (e) the progress made in re-opening of the route at Neeti and Mana that were closed in 1962?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a)&(b) An Indian inter-ministerial delegation visited the Tibet Autonomous Region from June 17-20, 2006 and held discussions with the Chinese authorities to finalise the various modalities for conducting border trade between India and China through Nathula in accordance with the Memorandum on Expanding Border Trade signed between India and China on June 23, 2003.

The resumption of border trade through Nathula, which is the third border trade point between India and China, is expected to contribute to economic benefits in the border areas on the two sides, and foster greater mutual understanding and trust between the two countries.

(c) Yes.

(d) Border trade through Nathula was resumed with effect from July 6, 2006 at the Changgu border trade mart at Sherathang on the Indian side and Renqinggang trade mart on the Chinese side. Border trade through Nathula will take place from June 1-September 30 every year. It will, however, be open to the designated authorities of the two sides to extend or reduce the period of trade when considered necessary on account of exigencies like weather conditions.

(e) Government have proposed to the Chinese side the possibility of opening additional border trading points, including through the Niti Pass in the Middle Sector of the India-China border areas.